

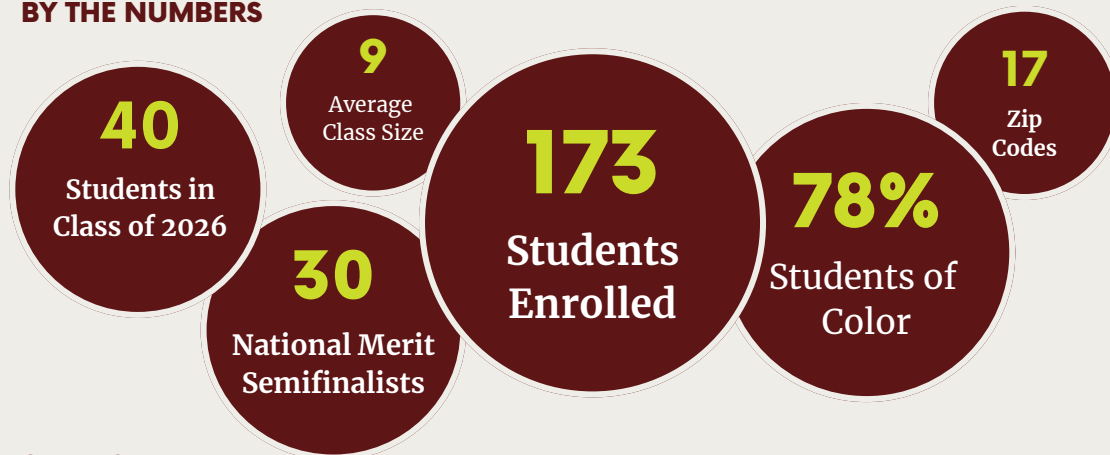
INTRODUCTION

Established in 2006, the Davidson Academy is a public middle and high school located on the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) campus, designated by Nevada legislation as a “university school for profoundly gifted pupils” (NRS Chapter 388C). Driven by the mission to provide profoundly gifted young people an advanced educational opportunity matched to their abilities, strengths, and interests, students are grouped by ability, not by age or grade. All students must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- A score of 99.9% or above on nationally normed intelligence tests and/or nationally normed achievement tests.
- Demonstrate social and emotional maturity, an overall readiness for a rigorous school, and individual student commitment to participate in an accelerated education.

During the 2017–2018 school year, the Davidson Academy launched its online campus, available to students anywhere in the U.S. and Canada. As of the 2022–2023 school year, Davidson Academy Online is an independent school with CEEB code 292246.

BY THE NUMBERS



CURRICULUM

Each student develops a Prospective Learning Plan (PLP) to serve as a roadmap for their academic and personal goals. These plans guide students through a rigorous core curriculum and help them make elective decisions based on their interests and abilities. PLPs are consistent with the Academy’s philosophy of treating students as individuals invested in their own learning. High school students engage in a blend of advanced high school, undergraduate, and graduate-level courses. Breadth and depth are emphasized rather than teaching to any particular standardized test or curriculum. Coursework stresses higher-level thinking skills, critical and creative engagement, collaborative discussion with fellow classmates, and opportunities for experiential learning. Classes are designed to require students’ active participation in their learning. Core subject classes take place from Monday to Thursday, and most electives take place on Fridays. Students take an average of five core classes and three elective classes. Students must be enrolled in at least five credit-bearing courses. During senior year, students are required to be enrolled in at least four.

EXTRACURRICULAR CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Due to the rigor of the curriculum, students are encouraged to take part in a modest, but meaningful amount of extracurricular activities within and outside the school community. Students are not required to complete volunteer hours.

sampling of
school-
based
clubs and
activities

DECA
HOSA
NACLO
Math Competitions
Science Bowl
Science Olympiad
Speech and Debate
Peer Advising Liaisons

Art
Basketball
Chess
Christianity
Coding
Dance
Engineering
Film

Future Physicians
Green Earth Community
LGBTQIA+
Literary Magazine
Math
Music & Vocalist
Philosophy
Women in Stem

Director: Colleen Harsin
Director of Curriculum: Erin Vienneau
Student Engagement Specialist: Rebecca Cellar
Counseling Team: Jesse Kachurak, Laurie Parish

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CEEB Code: 292027

Accreditation

The Davidson Academy is accredited by Cognia on August 27, 2024. Schools in good standing can maintain their accreditation for a six-year term.

Governing Board

The Davidson Academy Governing Board is a public body and is hereby given such reasonable and necessary powers, not conflicting with the Constitution and the laws of the state of Nevada, as may be required to attain the ends for which the school was established and to promote the welfare of pupils who are enrolled in the school (according to Nevada Revised Statute 388C).

The governing body is comprised of three individuals selected by senior elected officials of the state of Nevada; four individuals selected by the founding entity (The Davidson Institute for Talent Development); the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (ex officio); and the President of the University of Nevada, Reno (ex officio). Public meetings are held four times a year, once every quarter.

School Recognitions

- Ranked #4 Best Public High School in America by U.S. News & World Report
- Ranked #2 Best Public High School in America and #1 Best Public Middle School in America by Niche.com’s “2026 Best Schools in America Rankings and Grades”
- Ranked #4 Best Public School in America by The Education Magazine

Personal Development

A set of core values encourages and prepares students to become leaders and contribute their talents and intellect to society. An environment is cultivated where students can experience a sense of independence and ownership over their actions and influences. This applies to their classroom responsibilities and their relationships with educators, friends and family.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE OFFERINGS

An Academy diploma is considered an advanced high school diploma in the state of Nevada. Diplomas are awarded based on the following requirements:

- Cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher
- 28 total credits required – 18 core, 6 general electives, 2 arts and humanities, 2 PE

Some classes are not offered every year. Elective courses change yearly based on student interest. Students may design and lead their own elective seminar as approved by the administration.

English 4 Credits	Composition & Analysis Rhetoric & Literary Analysis American Literature	Studies in American Literature British Literature Advanced Rhetoric	Science Writing & Communications Critical Theory
Math 4 Credits	Geometry Algebra II Pre-Calculus Statistics	Calculus I Calculus I/II Calculus II	Calculus III Year Calculus III Semester Differential Equations
Science 4 Credits	Physical Science Biology Advanced Biology	Physics Advanced Physics Advanced Geosystems	Chemistry Advanced Chemistry
History 3 Credits: 1 World, 1 US, 0.5 Gov, 0.5 Economics	Patterns in Modern History History of the United States	Principles of American Government & Economics 20 th Century World History Through Film Understanding the Post 9/11 World	
World Language 3 Credits	Chinese 1-2 Chinese 3-4 Chinese 5/6 - 7/8 Chinese 9/10 -11/12	Spanish 1-2 Spanish 3-4 Spanish 5/6 - 7/8 Spanish 9/10 - 11/12	
Electives sampling of current offerings	The Actor Factor Animation Art: Drawing/Painting Astronomy Outdoor Skills Geography and Tourism	Improv Journalism Kung Fu Leadership Music Theory	Philosophy of Science Plane Geometry Machine Learning/AI Yearbook Yoga Student Led: Biotechnology Film Critique Linguistics Neuroscience Rock Climbing Storytelling

DUAL ENROLLMENT

If a student exhausts Academy classes offered in one or more subjects, they may have the option to enroll in courses at UNR in accordance with their PLP. Coursework completed at UNR, or another approved dual enrollment provider, is added to a student's high school transcript.

sampling of current UNR courses for academy students	ENGR 100 Intro to Engineering PAIT 111 First Year Northern Paiute ART 141 Intro to Digital Photography ECON 102 Principles of Microeconomics PSY 234 Psychology of Adolescence MATH 330 Linear Algebra	STAT 352 Probability and Statistics BIOL 300 Principles of Genetics HIST 394 England and British Empire II CHEM 341 Organic Chemistry I CS 446 Principles of Operating Systems ATMS 412 Intro to Air Pollution
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COLLEGE MATRICULATION: CLASSES 2021-2025

134 GRADUATES, 66 INSTITUTIONS

*two or more students | **five or more students

ASU; Brown; Caltech*; Cal Poly SLO; Carnegie Mellon*; Case Western; Colorado State, Fort Collins; Columbia U*; Cornell; Dartmouth; DePaul; Dominican; Duke Kunshan; Emory*; Fordham*; GW; Georgia Tech; Harvard*; Harvey Mudd*; Johns Hopkins; Lewis & Clark; MIT**;
Northeastern; Northwestern*;

Oregon Tech; Oxford College at Emory; Pepperdine; Pomona; Purdue*; Reed*; Rice*; Sarah Lawrence; Scripps; Smith College; Stanford**; Swarthmore; Temple; Trinity College Dublin; U of Alabama*; UBC; UC Berkeley*; UC Davis; UCSD*; UCSB; UCSC; U Chicago*; U of Edinburgh;

U of Hawaii, Manoa; UIUC*; UMich*; U of Minnesota, Twin Cities*; U of Nevada, Reno**; U of Oklahoma*; U of Pittsburgh; U of Rochester*; UT Dallas**; USC; U of Virginia*; U of Washington; U Wisconsin, Madison; Utrecht; Vanderbilt; WashU*; Williams; Wittenberg U; Yale*

Grading Scale

Grade	Weight	Percent
A	4.0	93 – 100
A-	3.67	90 – 92
B+	3.33	87 – 89
B	3.0	83 – 86
B-	2.67	80 – 82
C+	2.33	77 – 79
C	2.0	73 – 76
C-	1.67	70 – 72
D+	1.33	67 – 69
D	1.0	63 – 66
D-	0.67	60 – 62
F	0.0	00 – 59

Davidson Academy uses a semester schedule. GPAs are calculated on an unweighted 4.0 scale for all courses. Only Davidson Academy and Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) courses are calculated in the GPA. Courses graded pass/fail and approved outside coursework are not included in GPA calculations. Some Davidson Academy electives are pass/fail.

For the class of 2026, the mean GPA is a 3.8. Davidson Academy does not rank students.

Testing

Nevada's College and Career Readiness (CCR) assessment is the ACT +Writing. The class of 2026 took the ACT +Writing in the spring of 2025.

Advanced Placement

Davidson Academy does not offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, but many students choose to take AP Exams. As of 2024–2025 Students may take up to 3 AP exams per year. Below is a summary of testing from May 2025:

- 78 students
- 160 exams
- 99% of test scores 3 or above

COVID-19 Response

2020-2021 School Year

Academy classes were available via a remote learning model for the entire 2020-2021 school year. Most students chose to access this option for the duration of the year from home. However, when in-person classes became an option, students were also allowed to engage in remote learning from the school building.

The Academy recognized that individual students experienced various effects of the pandemic. As a result, students and their families were offered options to consider in the context of their unique situation. Students were given the choice to continue with regular letter grades, or to switch to a pass/fail grade for select high school classes. A pass is 70% or higher.